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Technology Strategies for Verse Novel and Multi-genre Novel

How can I integrate technology into the classroom? The increase in technology advances is growing every day. With the use of technology also growing, it is very important to use technology in the classroom to get students actively involved and eager to learn. I read the verse novel, *Boris* by Cynthia Rylant, and the multi-genre novel, *Nothing But The Truth* by AVI. I then came up with three strategies for each novel to teach the novels to students and integrate technology into teaching literacy as well as into the classroom. I will discuss my three different strategies for each novel and their purpose, cyber-hunts I created, and book recommendations.

The first strategy I developed for the verse novel, Boris, was a glogster. It is a poster like activity. The website you can use to create the glogster allows you to pick everything such as color, layout, and images. Students would be able to create their own glogster using their own creativity and perceptions of what they wanted to put on it. The glogster activity would be a post-reading activity that would be used to reinforce comprehension after the book is read. It would reinforce comprehension by having the students create a glogster reflecting what they have just read. They could put words, images, or even colors describing the book. Glogster was really fun to use, and it would be a great strategy for kids. They would love the freedom to be creative.

Another strategy I came up with for my verse novel is a wordle. Wordle is a site that allows you to type in words, phrases, or definitions, and it randomly mixes them up into some kind of random order. There is even the choice of arranging them into a certain image such as a cat, dog, or person. This strategy would be used as a during or post reading strategy to help reinforce vocabulary, or it could be used to simply type in words describing the book which would help with comprehension. The students would type in words and their definitions which would help reinforce vocabulary and create their own wordle which would be fun. The wordle would be a learning activity, but it would be fun at the same time which would be something kids enjoy.

The third strategy for the verse novel is a blogger. Blogger allows an individual to post any kind of thoughts on a subject or matter, and it also allows others to comment on that post. The book, *Boris*, is about a cat and his owner. Therefore, I used blogger as a pre-reading strategy to get the students involved using their own schemata and critical thinking. I posted a paragraph about the book and what it is about. I then gave an assignment using blogger, but I gave four different options to choose from. The assignment is to post a comment on my blog and discuss an animal they have, an experience they have shared with an animal, what adventures they think Boris will go on, or what kind of relationship they think Boris will have with his owner. This strategy gets helps them with critical thinking skills, and gets them thinking about the book they are going to read.

The first strategy I developed for the multi-genre novel, Nothing But The Truth, was a strategy using Phrasr. Phrasr is a site that you can use to type in words or phrases, and choose pictures to go with the words. I chose a phrase that I feel is responsible for the events that take place in the book, and I chose pictures that represent the words in the phrase. This strategy is a post-reading strategy which allows children to think about what phrase they want to use, and choose pictures to go with the words. This strategy would help with comprehension. Choosing pictures to go with each word will also help with vocabulary and meaning. Phrasr is an easy and fun way to integrate technology into the classroom.

The second strategy for multi-genre novel is creating an online slideshow with music describing the book and major events that took place. I uploaded photos and added captions to describe the main storyline of the book. I added music that went along with the novel, or in this case, the song that played a major part in the book. The slideshow is a post reading strategy, which reinforces comprehension of what the students just read. The student would have to think back at what he or she just read to create their own slideshow. This is a simple strategy that can be used to ensure that students comprehend what they read.

The last strategy I came up with for the multi-genre novel is the penzu online journal. I wrote an entry putting myself in the main character’s perspective, and I wrote what I thought he was really feeling about the events that were occurring in his life. This strategy is a critical thinking strategy that calls for the students to think about and evaluate what they have read and write based on what they know about the character and what he or she is feeling. This strategy can be used as a during or post reading strategy assignment. The online journal is an excellent way for the student to write using technology, but this strategy will also tell you a little bit about the student depending on how or what he or she writes.

I also created cyber-hunts on both authors, Cynthia Rylant and AVI. The cyber-hunts consist of eight questions on the authors. They have a question and a link as to where the answer can be found. It is the student’s job to search the internet using those links to find the answers and gain information about the author. This is another simple way to use technology in the classroom.

Both *Boris* and *Nothing But The Truth* are great books, and they would be great selections to use in the classroom. There are many technology strategies that can be developed to incorporate technology into teaching literacy. If you like *Boris*, some other books you may also enjoy by Cynthia Rylant are *Ludie’s Life, A Fine White Dust, In November, The Old Woman Who Named Things, Cat Heaven,* and *Dog Heaven*. These are all books with great lessons. If you like *Nothing But The Truth*, some other books by AVI you may also like are *A Place Called Ugly, Blue Heron, Sometimes I Think I hear My Name, The Barn,* and *Iron Thunder*. These are all books for young adults and depending on grade level and maturity can potentially be taught in the classroom.

This assignment of developing strategies for these books has taught me that there are many ways to use technology with teaching literacy in the classroom. There are numerous technology strategies that can be developed using many different resources. All of the strategies I came up with were fun to develop, so I know kids are going to love them. They will make learning fun and enjoyable. These strategies will give kids freedom of creativity, and they will leave them telling everyone what they did in school today!